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MEDIAEVALISM AND MODERNISM

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"Modernism" has already become as vague and ambiguous a term as Socialism. The latter stands for anything between common Christian charity—a recognition of social duties acknowledged by all and neglected by most—and a systematic reconstruction of the whole framework of society. Similarly, Modernism, thanks largely to the Encyclical *Pascendi*, has come to stand for the mildest as well as for the extremist concessions of Roman Catholicism to the exigencies of modern life and thought and sentiment. Owing to this comprehensiveness, it is possible to group together in one unholy fraternity, and under the same anathema, those who are sincere Catholics by conviction and those who, having lost all faith in the Church, continue Catholics in name and profession, whether through indifference, or self-interest, or consideration for the feelings of others. Men whose modernity is little more than an educated Ultramontaniam are thus brought under suspicion of a secret sympathy with deists, atheists, and agnostics, and held up to the odium of the faithful at large.

It is impossible to discuss profitably or intelligently so wide a range of positions, which have nothing in common but dissent from the uncompromising intransigence of Pius X and his advisers and their refusal to pass an absolute and indiscriminate condemnation on the entire results of seven centuries of human progress. If we cannot define Modernism as a finished system or theory may be defined, we can at least describe it as a tendency, a spirit, a movement. In this respect again it is somewhat like Socialism, which is not the less a real and living force because it has so far failed to arrive at explicit self-consciousness or coherent self-expression. I think then that the term "Modernist" should be restricted to one who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between Catholic Christianity (I do not say Catholic

theology) and modern culture, however little he may see his way to that synthesis or be satisfied with existing attempts. And by a synthesis I do not mean a compromise involving the sacrifice of anything vital or essential on either side, but a unification resulting from a careful criticism of Catholicism on the one hand and of modern culture on the other; from a sifting out of their perishable from their permanent values; and from a recognition that their alleged incompatibilities are apparent and not real.

This provisional definition excludes from the category of Modernism those who consider that the said incompatibilities are real and not merely apparent; whether it be that they accept the results of modern progress as fatal to the claims of the Church, or accept the claims of the Church as fatal to the results of modern progress. Disbelief in the compatibility of Catholicism and Criticism unites these two extremes against the faith and hope of the Modernist; and indeed some of the most ardent allies of Pius X are to be found among the unbelievers inside as well as outside the Church, especially amongst those of the latter who consider that Modernism may give a new lease of life to a moribund and mischievous institution.

An uncritical acceptance of the ultramontane conception of the essentials of Catholicism on the one hand, or an equal credulity as to the values of modern enlightenment on the other, still more a combination of both, will almost inevitably make the hopes of Modernism appear paradoxical. They may be so; but at least it is in the interests of truth that the hope or hypothesis should be tried to the uttermost before it is abandoned. Far slenderer hopes have attained to fruition in spite of far greater discouragement.

"Modernism" was so named, with prejudicial intent, by its adversaries—by men whose hopes lie buried in the irrevocable past and whose attitude towards the present is one of ever increasing estrangement, distrust, and hostility. But the implied reproach falls somewhat flat on the modern ear. Since we must have a sect-name, we might well have a worse than one which expresses our catholic conviction that the Church must be always modern as well as ancient; of today as well as of yesterday; that since culture progresses, the synthesis of religion with cult-

ure is an abiding duty, an unending process. And then it indicates most aptly our specific difference from those Catholics who regard the synthesis of religion with the culture of the thirteenth century as final and valid for all times, and whom we may therefore most justly call Mediaevalists.

"Catholic" or "Roman Catholic" is the common genus of Modernist and Mediaevalist. As belief in Christ makes a Christian, so belief in the Roman Catholic Church makes a Roman Catholic. There are Christians for whom Christianity consists in one, or a very few, Gospel truths, and who regard the whole Catholic system, doctrinal and institutional, as an encrustation—now mischievous and meaningless, even if once necessary and protective. Against these, Modernists and Mediaevalists are agreed in regarding the Church as the work of the indwelling Spirit of Christ; as a divine and not merely as a human creation; as constituted by the legitimate and fruitful marriage of Gospel principles and forces with those of civilization and even of other religions; by the impregnation and leavening of the whole fullness of human life with the leaven of a new inspiration. Both have faith in the Church, in the concrete living community, as they have faith in Christ. As in Christ they see the Son of God where history and reason see but man, so in the Church they see the organ of Christ's spirit and not merely the inevitable resultant of historical conditions. And it is this common faith or interpretation of the divine meaning of phenomena which unites them as Catholics.

The specific difference that divides the Modernist from the Mediaevalist will be more keenly appreciated by contrast with its opposite.

Few readers of the Encyclical *Pascendi* will have paused to ask: "What then is this imperilled position of which Modernism is the negation? If all this is false, what is true?" If Modernism was there depicted so as to shock ordinary Christian susceptibilities to the utmost, Mediaevalism, for like reasons, was decently draped and kept in the background. Thus it was hoped to enlist Protestant sympathy in behalf of a system which in the day of its power could find no place for Protestantism but the stake, and which even in this document gives abundant proof that the

persecuting spirit is still willing though the flesh is weak; that milder manners are to be ascribed to lack of power, not to change of principle.

If Modernists and Mediaevalists agree in their faith in Catholicism, considered as a concrete living reality, they differ in their theoretical analysis and expression of the nature of that life and reality. For the Mediaevalist, Catholicism means a synthesis effected between Christian tradition and the fashionable philosophy of the thirteenth century. Upon that synthesis the Council of Trent set the seal of finality at a time when the new learning seemed to call for a theological revolution which the Church was then too feeble to face and which must have weakened those claims to absolute authority that she was maintaining against the reformers. Since then, the notion that the Church should "come to terms" with contemporary enlightenment has been regarded as a temerity. All subsequent developments, up to the Vatican Council and the Encyclical *Pascendi*, have been on the lines of the *Summa Theologica*, and have only widened the breach between lay and clerical culture. There has been no criticism of categories and methods, no theological revolution like that effected by S. Thomas. So innocent are the seminaries of history or of the historical sense that today the essential "modernism" of S. Thomas is unsuspected. The Catholicism of the *Summa* with all its theology and its institutions; with its seven sacraments (form and matter), its ritual, its dogmatic formulas, its priesthood, its papacy of the Isidorian decretals, its universal sovereignty—all is supposed to be the direct and immediate creation of Christ and his twelve Apostles. If the duty of synthesis between religion and culture, faith and knowledge, the Church and the age, is still admitted verbally, yet it is voided of all sense. "Faith must be at one with science"—yes, but with *true* science; and the test of true science is its agreement with Faith, which is thus judge and accuser at once. Such synthesis means, in practice, the submission of science, not to Faith, but to the elements of mediaeval science incorporated in the dogmatic expression of Faith—the subordination of modern to mediaeval knowledge and reason. To question or attack these consecrated survivals of old-world science and history is, in the

eyes of the Mediaevalist, the same as to attack the Faith itself. Conceiving himself to represent the most primitive and apostolic form of Christianity, he will no doubt repudiate the title of Mediaevalist; but it is none the less true that, in many respects, Modernism represents an older Catholicism than his, and notably in its recognition of this very principle of synthesis, by which New Testament theology gave way to patristic, and patristic to scholastic; and by which scholastic must now give way to historico-critical.

Those who would see a fair and open presentment of that mediaeval Church-theory which lurks between the lines of the Encyclical *Pascendi* cannot do better than consult an article, "The Catholic Church: What is it?" by Monsignor John Vaughan, in the *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1908. Mgr. Vaughan has been aptly described as the brain of the English Roman Catholic community. His books, *Faith or Folly?*, *Thoughts for all Times*, etc., have sold as only the best books or the worst novels can sell. This, together with his high ecclesiastical position and the careful censorship to which the utterances of even the highest are now subjected, guarantees the thoroughly representative character of his exposition, which, had it come from the pen of a "Modernist," might have seemed a travesty or caricature. Apart from certain puns and pleasantries which are all his own, and a certain clearness of style not entirely due to the shallowness of the position itself, Mgr. Vaughan says nothing that is not said in every seminary-manual of theology, nothing that is not held by Pius X and by the vast numerical majority of the present episcopate.

He proceeds therefore to explain (to the benighted Anglican bishop of Carlisle whom he is refuting) that, in order to secure to men the supreme advantage of theological uniformity of expression, "Christ has provided that in his Church all shall be ruled and directed by one. As the sap of an ordinary tree passes up through a single stem, then courses along the great outstretching arms and through each of the lesser branches until it enters into and gives life and vigor to every individual leaf, so the divine sap of revealed truth passes from the lips of the one supreme pastor and is communicated to the bishops, who in turn communicate it to the priests, who finally explain it and propose it to each individual

member of the entire flock." "What could be simpler; what could be more practical and efficacious?"

We have here the great mediaeval simplification by which the whole Church is concentrated into the person of the Roman pontiff, and the private will and judgment of a privileged individual is substituted for the collective voice and mind of the entire Christian community. Dictated by political expediency, inspired by papal arrogance, supported by fictions and forgeries, formulated by S. Thomas Aquinas, repudiated by the Reformers, contested by Jansenists and Gallicans, defended and promoted by the Jesuits, all but defined and imposed by the Vatican Council, it still lives on, in the teeth of history, in defiance of criticism, precisely on account of its alluring and fallacious simplicity—"What could be simpler; what could be more practical and efficacious?"

What will strike the educated non-Romanist reader as something peculiar to Mgr. Vaughan is really characteristic of the entire school of orthodox theology which he so faithfully represents. This naïve self-confidence, as of a rosy-cheeked school-boy who has just won the medal for catechism; this unaffected astonishment at the absurd perplexities of an Anglican bishop in face of the obvious and self-evident; this serene unconsciousness of the obsolete and worthless character of his premises, is inexplicable except for those who know the Roman seminary system from the inside—who know that the doctorate in theology is awarded to mere scholastic dialectic, and that the Sacred Scriptures and ecclesiastical history remain a *terra incognita* for all but a few restless and curious minds.

Here in the middle of the *Hibbert Journal*, like a mummy at a banquet, we have a writer who gives us four *a priori* reasons why Christ could not possibly have done otherwise than create the papacy; and then proves from two or three texts that he actually did so. He does not see that, *a priori* and *a fortiori*, a sinless papacy might have been expected; or that an infallible episcopate by its miraculous unanimity would have served better than an infallible pope, and would have been just as "possible" for the "omnipotence" of Christ. He is not aware that criticism has gravely undermined the authenticity of the texts on which he builds his logical house of cards. He does not know that the early Fathers

interpreted them far otherwise. He flouts the idea that unity of spirit and of charity is the mark by which men are to know the Church. What Christ prayed for was, in his view, that unity of theological formula which can only be secured by the infallible dictation of an absolute monarch. Of the history of the papacy he knows nothing; for, indeed, it sprang into existence on the day of Pentecost full-fledged! Why the papal infallibility, the very rule of faith and orthodoxy, should itself have been disputed for eighteen centuries, and only then defined, he does not say. He admits that "this machinery is of so simple and practical a character that if put into motion it must actually result in unity," *i.e.*, that this purely external uniformity is as little miraculous as that of a regiment of soldiers; and yet we are to see in it an obvious proof of the divinity of the Church of Rome, such as could only be afforded by a spontaneous and independent agreement of a multitude of witnesses. He appeals to the unanimity of the seven hundred bishops at the Vatican Council, as though there had been no recalcitrant minority; no packing of the Council with bishops *in partibus*; no contempt of the representative principle; no coercion, bullying, or intrigue; as though its shameful history never had been written and never could be written.

In all this we are listening not to Mgr. Vaughan but to the present official theology of the Roman Church and of the authors of the Encyclical *Pascendi*. Its place in relation to modern life and thought is that of Mgr. Vaughan's article in the middle of the *Hibbert Journal*—the dead in the midst of the living. "Friend," we feel inclined to say, "how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?"

Neither historically, critically, nor exegetically has this mediæval Church-theory a leg to stand on. Its logic may be faultless, but its premises and assumptions are hopelessly discredited. It is in direct collision, not with some new philosophy, but with a mass of hard indigestible facts. It can only live in the dark; and the most skilfully organized obscurantism will not be able to exclude the light very much longer. Already the books are opened and judgment has begun.

This state of things has forced upon the Modernist a distinction between the Church and Church-theory, as between Christ and

Christology, or between God and Theology. His faith is in the living community, not in the community's self-analysis or self-expression at any given stage of its growth. He believes that within the unity and continuity of the Catholic community the leaven of the Gospel slowly permeates the fruits of man's natural endeavor towards every kind of progress, intellectual, moral, social, political, and religious; that, in alliance with all that is best and worthiest and strongest in the natural order, it struggles towards that highest expression of Christianity which lay hidden in the simplicity of the Gospel. He believes that this attainment can only be won—can only be fruitful and satisfying because it is won—experimentally, through many tribulations and costly experiences of failure and error and defeat and discouragement; that our grasp on the good and true is but infirm; that we do not possess them permanently or profitably till we have tasted every bitterness of evil, struggled in the brambles of every deceit. Thus it is, and not by a sudden creative fiat, but gradually, progressively, yet infallibly, that the Spirit of Christ leads his Church into truth after truth and out of error after error.

If he holds to the Roman Catholic rather than to any other Christian community, it is because he believes in the principles of unity and continuity as necessary conditions of the development in question. For it is only as compressed within the boundaries of one institution that the scattered and diversified elements of a wide collective experience, past and present, are forced to jostle together, to correct and criticize one another, to amalgamate sooner or later in a rich and fruitful unification. The schismatic principle, like other crude simplifications, is essentially impoverishing. It evades instead of overcoming difficulties, and solves the problem by dropping its awkward elements. This method can only result in just that external, regimental uniformity, spiritually thin and insignificant, which is the ideal of Mgr. Vaughan and the Mediaevalists generally. The "excommunication principle" insures that the soldiers shall all be of exactly the same height and as void of individuality as possible. Uniformity, or unity without variety, is the easiest thing in the world to secure, and does not require the aid of the Holy Ghost. Unity in variety is necessarily an ideal from which the Roman Church is as far as the Angli-

can. Here unity is lacking; and there variety. What we Roman Catholics need is the recognition of the value of diversities as something to be overcome, not by violent repression or elimination, but by good-tempered, persevering endeavor to save every real value in a higher synthesis. To further and guide this labor is just the function of sane ecclesiastical authority, could such be conceived.

The hindrances to this alone significant and fruitful unity are to be found either in the "externalism" which gives to the conceptual, verbal, and outward expression of the Christian spirit and aim the same value as to the spirit itself, and therefore is willing to kill or be killed for the integrity of that expression; or else it is to be found in the "internalism" which underrates or denies the spiritual value of such an outward embodiment of faith and the duty of continually shaping it into a more perfect instrument of the Church's inward life and action. Modernism in this respect stands in the mean between the externalism of the Mediaevalist and the internalism of the Protestant. Only that unity is fruitful which is the synthesis of variety; only that variety which is seeking for unity. With à Kempis, the Modernist does not believe that certainty about purely theological problems is as vital a necessity for the individual as Mgr. Vaughan and his school seem to suppose, or that in the day of judgment we shall be examined as to our views on hypostasis, *ousia*, substance, accidents, and the rest. He holds that there is always more than enough light to live by. Yet on the other hand he recognizes that the collective life of the community requires to express itself in a growing system of conceptions formulas and institutions, by which a fruitful unifying pressure is brought to bear on the luxuriance of individual variations. Only when this system ceases to grow, when some stage in its evolution is apotheosized and imposed as final, does it become, like the Mediaeval synthesis, a sterile uniformity.

Akin to, and as it were a dimension of, this anti-schismatic principle of unity is the principle of historical continuity. The more or less conscious memory and record of past experiences is a condition of fulness and fertility for the collective as for the individual life. All that tends to make a people explicitly conscious

of its solidarity with the past is of priceless value for its healthy development, as determining the direction of its path into the future and forbidding deviations inconsistent with its true character. A radical denial of its own past is impoverishing for the same reason that schism and excommunication are impoverishing. The Modernist is distinguished from the Mediaevalist by his sense of history. The latter denies that his religion has grown, that it has any internal history. It was what it is: it is what it was. Its memory can teach it nothing. The papacy, the three texts, the four *a priori* reasons, "simple, efficacious, practical," were always there—what can the past teach us? For the Modernist, Catholicism is a growth whose present stage can be understood and valued only in the light of every past stage. Hence he is essentially (though not inertly or blindly) conservative—a parsimonious minimizer in the matter of necessary changes and adaptations to current ideas. Forms, customs, and institutions that have outlived all other meaning and utility are still precious to him as so many strands and fibres that tie the present to its roots in the deep-buried past of religious history, and by which the ghosts of his remote ancestry are gathered round him in his worship. Even at a grave crisis of transition like the present, when the accumulated negligences and arrears of centuries of Mediaeval intransigence have to be made up for by the sacrifices of almost a single generation, the Modernist seeks precedents and anticipations of such a reform in the premature aspirations and efforts of men like Abbot Joachim or Savonarola—men who beheld Antichrist in the unrestrained, triumphant Mediaevalism of those days when it was freer than now to bear its deadly fruit unashamed. Nothing is further from his desires than to erect a smart up-to-date Church on the site of the old. The new must transcend, but it must also justify, explain, and include, all the values of the old.

Unlike the Mediaevalist, who identifies the ecclesiasticism and the theology of the thirteenth century with revelation itself, and who therefore may not criticize them without prejudice to conscience, the Modernist in his attitude towards this moribund synthesis is critical and discriminating. He applies the parables of the wheat and the tares, of the good fish and the bad, not merely

to the members of the Church but to the ever tentative and perfectible efforts of her rulers and theologians to build up an outward embodiment and organ of her inward life and character. He sees that wheat and tares have been sown contemporaneously from the very first and at every period of her history; that they have grown and developed side by side, each according to its inherent logic; that there has ever been need of continual vigilance and weeding, according as the true nature of evil and erroneous principles has betrayed itself; that there have been harvest epochs, when the call has gone forth to separate, to bind up, and to burn the tares that long negligence has allowed to accumulate in the Master's field. But, for all this, he knows that for man preliminary error is often the necessary condition of truth, and evil of good; that relatively to an immature mind what is objectively false may be nearer the truth. He knows that no doctrine, practice, or institution has lived and given life on a large scale and for a long time but in virtue of some vital element which must be saved at all costs. Thin, poor, childish, mechanical, as they now seem to any but to the seminarian mind, yet these mediaevalist conceptions of dogma, revelation, faith, theology, inspiration, infallibility, papacy, priesthood, sacrifice, sacraments, saint-worship, hell, heaven, indulgences, purgatory—nay, even inquisition and persecution—all stood for the imperfect expression, or at least for the perversion, of some sound principle of religious life, individual or collective. Taking this external religion as an organic whole and not as a congeries of fragments, independently intelligible, the Modernist sees in it the work of the Holy Spirit immanent in the Christian community, striving to set forth, ever less inadequately, the Infinite and Transcendent in terms of the finite and human, according to the existing categories and beliefs of man's ever progressive mind and character. He realizes that if God is knowable, he is altogether incomprehensible in his transcendence; that of his inward essence, and consequently of man's relations to him, we can have none but symbolic conceptions. Our religion is therefore a mystery, an enigma, a dark glass. Faith is not knowledge; in their literal sense our creeds are not true. Faith is the conviction that whatever they tell us of the love, goodness, beauty, or

greatness of God is immeasurably less than the truth—is only an attempt to supply content to our barren idea of the Incomprehensible; is truer—or less untrue—in the measure that it more effectually raises our minds and hearts and stimulates our energies. According to S. Thomas Aquinas (not to speak of the Gospel), God himself is the central or formal object—in a sense the only object—of our faith. All other *credenda* are proposed to us merely as throwing light on his nature and his relations to man. But it is perfectly evident that the personal, individual spirit to whom we pray and in whom we trust is but a mental image or idol, in man's likeness, symbolic of the Incomprehensible and Infinite. We say rightly that God is at least equivalently spirit and at least equivalently personal; but of that which he actually is we have no comprehension. He is equivalently, but not "formally," all that we conceive. And if this holds of the central object of our creed, it plainly holds of the dependent objects. While treating the objects of faith as matters of miraculously communicated theological "knowledge," Mediaevalism, by speaking of them still as "mysteries," bears witness to the older view that was supplanted by impertinent scholastic rationalism and by concessions to popular materialism. For the Mediaevalist the Trinity is a difficulty rather than a mystery or enigma.

To charge the Modernist with Protestantism and private judgment is cheap but not intelligent. His faith is precisely in the Church; in a judgment which is objective because it is public and not private. It is the Mediaevalist who, by denying all inspiration and critical value to the collective experience reflection and judgment of the entire community, and by subjecting the whole Church, including the episcopate, to the personal will and judgment of a single bishop, has repudiated the fundamental idea of Catholicism and turned the constitution of the Church topsy-turvy. As Mgr. Vaughan puts it, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, all live by and from the root. So all truth and power and grace flow through the miraculously guided Pope down to the furthest members and branches of the purely passive and receptive Church: "What could be more simple?"—Yes; but what could be more false to history and to Catholic tradition?

What more childish, mischievous, and impracticable? What did the uncertainties, disputes, and councils of the Church during nineteen centuries mean, if the popes possessed, or claimed to possess, or were admitted to possess, this "simple, practical, and efficacious" means of producing uniformity?

The Modernist knows the crude modernity, the origin and history, the governmental and political motives, of this mechanical simplification. False as it is, it owes its life and persistence to certain truths which it perverts and caricatures. Like the whole mediaeval synthesis, it is one of those many hypotheses and plausibilities which were bound to be tried and experimentally disproved in the course of the Church's strugglings after truth, and by which her eventual apprehension of truth will be strengthened, deepened, and enriched. She will be all the better and none the worse for having passed through and beyond Mediaevalism, and for her costly experiments in absolutism. For the Modernist, she is a teaching Church just because she is a learning Church; because she can speak with all the authority of secular and world-wide experience; because she is unfailingly impelled to seek for an ever more perfect doctrinal and institutional embodiment of her unchanging faith and spirit. The Gospel is her conscience—a goad that will never suffer her to rest peacefully in any false or inadequate position, but infallibly drives her on in quest of the truer and better.

All this is, of course, as much an interpretation, a theology of Catholicism, as is the Mediaevalist synthesis. But, so far as it is more than a negation and destructive criticism of that synthesis, it is in large part a return to the principles of pre-Mediaeval and patristic Catholicism—to a deeper and more fruitful, because more experienced, appreciation of those principles. Moreover, unlike Mediaevalism, Modernism makes no pretence of being either a complete or a final synthesis. It is before all else a method and tendency rather than a system. Its inspiration or driving-force is history and not philosophy. The whole Mediaevalist fabric rests on a grotesque and monstrous ignorance of the history of the Bible and of the Church; that is, of the story of their genesis. For Mediaevalism they have no genesis, no history: they sprang into existence, full-formed, by a miracle.

Even the most meagre and reluctant estimate of the assured results of historical criticism is fatal to the Catholicism of Mgr. Vaughan and of the Encyclical *Pascendi*. For this reason the main argument of that Encyclical is devoted to an attempted demolition of the scientific method that leads to such disastrous results; while its practical measures are directed to the systematic inquisitorial repression of historical knowledge. The implied admission is surely significant: Rome is afraid of facts. Had Modernists cared only for the barren delights of destructive criticism, had they been the cold intellectualists described by the Encyclical, they would have abstained from all synthetic enterprise and contented themselves with stating facts and asking awkward questions. But being Catholics and believers, they were bound, for their own sakes and for the sake of others, to suggest some interpretation that would enable their Catholicism to survive the inevitable wreck of Mediaevalism; and to this end, most, though not all, of them have borrowed from modern philosophy those flexible categories of life and growth of which scholasticism knew little or nothing. Unassailable as long as they kept to facts and history, as soon as they trespassed on philosophical territory they gave the Mediaevalist (for whom scholasticism is of the very marrow of faith) the chance of crying, Heresy! and of sweeping away their facts along with their philosophy in the dust and confusion of one and the same anathema.

But when the dust settles the facts will still be there, as ugly and awkward as ever. Whatever other elements of the Modernist synthesis may perish—and many will—one point at least is secured for ever; namely, that however the interpretations of faith depend upon and presuppose the facts they interpret, faith has no jurisdiction in the realm of history. Faith may tell us that Christ was God and that he died for our sins; but only after history has told us that Christ existed and was crucified. Whether we know them through human witness, or angelic witness, or divine witness, historical facts remain historical facts, made credible by adequate testimony, and can by no possibility be matter of faith, or more than the natural text whose supernatural meaning faith interprets. On their phenomenal side, as links in the sequence of events, the

miracles of the Gospel belong to history and not to faith; and their factual truth must be as accessible to the veriest infidel as to the believer whose faith alone can divine their supernatural significance. Here is a conclusion to which we are simply forced by the pressure of historical evidence, and which of itself and alone is fatal to the Mediaevalist synthesis. One may excommunicate M. Loisy, but to excommunicate facts is very like excommunicating oneself.¹

Let us now turn for a moment from the speculative differences of these two systems which have lived side by side for some years in the Roman Church to consider the causes, the character, and the probable issues of the acute conflict which has arisen between them under the present pontificate.

While no doubt believing himself infallible, Leo XIII did not take his infallibility too seriously. "Now that We are infallible," he is reported to have said, "we must be very careful about our utterances." At all events his general action was not governed by that more extravagant interpretation of his powers which the intentional ambiguities of the dogmatic definition of 1870 left open. He fostered his authority cautiously, and took care not to risk it by too rude a conflict with the stubborn realities of a faithless world. Not till his powder was perfectly dry would he venture forth to battle in the name of the Lord.

The faith of Pius X, in strength, simplicity and sincerity, is that of a little child—the faith that in other times and circumstances has often changed the face of the world. Without any sophistical distinctions, he believes that to him has been given all power in heaven and on earth; that he is not only infallible in matters of faith but also in matters of history and science that

¹ For those who would inform themselves more accurately on the subject of Modernism and its history perhaps no book is more illuminating than M. Loisy's latest publication, *Quelques Lettres* (Paris, Nourry), in which, as nowhere else, we get an "all-together" view of his work, his ideas, his conflict. The *Programme of Modernism* (London, Fisher Unwin) is very valuable as bringing to a focus the various scriptural and historical problems which have, so to say, forced the movement into existence. *Lendemain de l'Encyclique* (Paris, Nourry) is also a very brilliant little synopsis of the situation by a group of French ecclesiastics. Finally, the volume on Modernism by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, Vicar of Paddington (London, Pitman), gives a most sympathetic and understanding outsider's view of the movement, and supplies an exhaustive bibliography.

bear upon faith; that the whole Church lives from him as a tree from its root; that it rests on him, the Rock, as an inverted pyramid on its apex; that the jurisdiction of the collective episcopate, of the ecumenical council, of the canon law, is all borrowed from him and can be overridden or taken back by him; that if he chooses he can take the election of bishops entirely into his own hands; that he can, if expedient, appoint his own successor; that, in a word, he alone in his own person is the *Ecclesia docens*—the teaching and ruling Church, while the episcopate, no less than the “lower” clergy and the laity, have no other duty or responsibility but to submit, to listen, to obey. Needless to say, it is no sort of self-sufficiency, no confidence in his own learning or wisdom, that allows a humble man thus to exalt himself, but a childlike faith in the promise of divine, miraculous guidance. Neither cardinals nor bishops were perhaps quite prepared for so extreme and logical a development of their concessions of 1870; but it is almost impossible to question the logic, nor can they now, by any constitutional method, recover their alienated birth-right.

Although anti-Modernism held a conspicuous place in his programme of general restoration, the first efforts of Pius X were directed to the much-needed work of the moral reform of the Roman clergy and prelacy—a reform prosecuted with a zeal and energy highly distasteful to the clerics in question. It was the interest of these latter to divert this zeal into other channels, and Modernism was an excellent lightning-conductor. Men whose preoccupations had been anything but theological became suddenly scandalized at the enormities of criticism; many a broken career was mended, many a spotted reputation restored, as the reward of diligence in the crusade against theological corruption. After all, it is an accepted axiom that orthodoxy is the root of morality. It is futile to cut down the evil tree and leave its root in the ground. Get the theology right, and all will go well. These were considerations to weigh with a naïve, unhistorical mind. Moreover there was the class-ambition of the Roman theological schools enlisted in the cause. These had long felt the sceptre of intellectual leadership slipping from their grasp, and realized that the triumph of the historical and scientific method must be their ruin. Then

there was a whole host of frankly worldly interests—gain,² power, ambition, and the like—intimately bound up with the Mediaevalist simplification, and seriously threatened by a reading of history that would restore the laity, the “lower” clergy, and the episcopate to their primitive share in the doctrinal and governmental activity of the Church.

Then there is the considerable numerical majority of lay-folk, and even priests, who have been trained for two generations or so by catechisms and theological handbooks in which Mediaevalism is set forth with all that glaring self-evidence which it presents in the treatment of Mgr. Vaughan, undimmed by the mists of history, criticism, or exegesis. To these the system commends itself not only by its compendious intellectual simplicity, but as reducing their ecclesiastical duties to that of passive, blind, irresponsible obedience. Never having heard or read of any but the Ultramontane interpretation of Catholicism, to assail that is in their eyes to assail God himself; nor will they be patient of a view which would trouble their mental or moral inertia. Thus all the spiritual laziness, all the supine ignorance, of the Church are up in arms against Modernism.

² Finance as a factor of dogmatic evolution would be an interesting study. The considerations which shaped the Mediaeval doctrine of the papacy were financial as much as political. What is priceless cannot be sold for a price; yet it cannot be had without an “honorarium,” an alms, a fee. Hence to be the sole source of all spiritual liberties, privileges, and graces is not an unenviable position. If every bishop could dispense from marriage impediments; could do all that Rome does, Rome would be as poor as any other see. Again, the doctrine of the finite and therefore mechanically divisible value of the Mass has been determined by financial exigencies. Also the substitution of a purely vindictive Purgatory for the ancient medicinal Purgatory. A debt of spiritually profitless pains can be cancelled by the masses and alms of survivors. Modernism is not very indulgent to this *locus theologicus*, and not likely to be popular with those who “live by the Altar” in this fashion. In a hundred unsuspected ways it tends to spoil the market. For example, there is an enormous demand for and supply of text-books of correct Roman College theology, moral and dogmatic, which every prudent bishop desires to see in the hands of his seminarians, and which in the eyes of Modernism are considerably worse than waste-paper. For more than fifty years the Jesuit manuals of Perrone, Tongiorgi, Palmieri, Franzelin, Liberatore, Gury, Ballerini, Cornoldi, etc., have deluged the seminary world and been a source of no mean fortune to their common proprietor. Taking human nature as we know it from history, it must be confessed that the strongest and fiercest interest that truth has to contend against is the money interest—not less fierce because it is often subconscious in its influence.

Finally there is the all-permeating Society of Jesus, whose *raison d'être* has been the support of the absolutist interpretation of papal authority. Called into existence to oppose the counter-extravagances of the Reformation, it appropriated, systematized, and defended as of faith the crude absolutism of Gregory VII, Boniface VIII, Alexander VI. Hand in hand with the Roman Curia, strengthening and strengthened by it at the expense of the Church, it worked steadily for three centuries at the elimination of every vestige of the democratic and ancient Catholic conception of the Church's constitution; till in 1870 it achieved the practical abdication by the collective episcopate of all independent power and jurisdiction. Itself a military despotism, it has managed to impose its own constitution on the Church, and so far as Christ's Kingdom is of this world and not spiritual, so far as it has to fight political battles with political weapons, nothing could be more "simple, efficacious, and practical." The Pope now holds the same relation to the bishops, clergy, and faithful as the General of the Society does to the provincials, the rectors, and their subjects. They are nothing: he is everything. Here, unlimited rights; there, unlimited duties. Nor is it only its governmental form and principles that the Society has gradually imposed on the Church. The seminary system, the manual-theology, the enervating casuistry, the mechanical, anti-mystical asceticism, the trivial devotions, the liturgical decadence—these and many other features are not the Church's but the Society's. The seeming verdure does not belong to the ecclesiastical oak, but to the Jesuit ivy which holds it together at a good risk of squeezing the life out of it. Plainly the attitude of the Society towards Modernism with its all-intrusive historical search-light could only be one of unqualified hostility.

The weapons of attack as enumerated in the Encyclical *Pasceudi* are such as Modernists have a right to expect from the character and motives of their opponents. An organized system of prying and secret delation; a campaign of systematic defamation and slander; the methods of the *Corrispondenza Romana* and of the "*bonne presse*" in general, compared with which those of the yellowest journalism are Christian and respectable; the boycotting of professors, of journals, of publishers; the suspen-

sion, often entailing the starvation, of suspected clerics; the repression of clerical, and as far as possible of episcopal, reunions and associations—these and the like are the weapons in which the Encyclical puts its trust. For the execution of such a programme none but the basest and unworthiest will offer their services; and thus it is into the hands of these that the destiny of their betters is committed.

Except for the futile attack on the historic method, there has not been in the Encyclical or since the Encyclical any sober and serious attempt to fight Modernism with the sword of history and reason—nothing but rhetorical tirades for the confirmation of the ignorant in their ignorance.

We need no longer, as a few months ago, speculate on the probable result of these methods. Already they are bearing their bitter fruit in abundance. Those outside (and alas! many inside) the Church who identify Catholicism with Mediaevalism and confound the two in one common hatred are witnessing with ill-disguised joy what seems to them the headlong rush of the Church's rulers down the steep that leads to the abyss. When Modernists who would stand between the Church and destruction are swept down by the stampede, they cheer and applaud—and Rome takes their applause with stolid seriousness. But to all the world it is evident that the practical methods of the Encyclical are those of a cause that has lost all faith in itself; that has nothing to hope from the inherent power of truth and justice; that subconsciously knows itself to be intellectually and morally bankrupt.

And of these two bankruptcies the latter is the more serious. The methods of Mgr. Montagnini³ are after all those of his patron and explicit approver, the Cardinal Secretary, and those of every nunciature throughout the world; and they are such as must subject any government, still more a would-be spiritual government, to the moral censure of Christian civilization. Mgr. Montagnini is in diplomatic disgrace for the crime of having been found out; but how little he is in moral disgrace is proved by his recent promotion to a canonry in the Lateran. And Rome imagines that these things can still be done, day after day, without apology or reparation as in the epochs of her greatest power and corrup-

³ See *Fiches Pontificales*. Paris, Nourry.

tion—that she can at once patronize the *Corrispondenza Romana* and claim the respect and obedience of upright and honorable men.

One might speak at length of the political and the financial bankruptcy of the Mediaeval system, but enough has been said to show that in the violence of the anti-Modernist crusade we witness not the symptoms of returning health and vigor, but the convulsions of a death-agony, the last flicker of an expiring flame.

This violent precipitation of a crisis for which the Church at large is by no means ready can afford but little satisfaction to the far-seeing Modernist. True, it has given the movement self-consciousness; it has immensely multiplied and united its adherents; it has evoked and justified a spirit of resistance; it has won for it the sympathy of the religious intelligence of the world. But such inevitable and radical revolutions should be slow and noiseless in the measure that the scandal and religious upset of the multitudes is to be avoided or minimized. The *Ignis Ardens* of the present pontificate must inevitably be followed (as is curiously prophesied) by the *Religio Depopulata* of the next.

Yet in spite of this, the true Modernist is, as we have said, one who believes in the vitality and recuperative power of that formless, underlying, pre-hierarchic Church which, as it preceded and produced, so also can criticize, reject, and survive the great experiment of Mediaevalism. He appeals, not with Pascal “Ad Jesu Christi tribunal,” not to a future Pope or Council, but to the silent Church that thinks, feels, endures, and bides its time; from the Church Mediaeval to the Church Eternal.

This no doubt is faith and hope rather than reason; yet not without some basis in reason and history that diverse minds will estimate diversely. For, unlike many abortive anticipations of Modernism in the past, the present movement owes its rapidly accelerating force and impetus, not to uncertain theories and speculations, but to a whole cumulus of facts, each as awkward for Mediaevalism as was the single discovery of Galileo. None has more right than the Modernist to say, “Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be.” Such was practically the response of M. Loisy to Pius X, who, not content

with that critic's profession of the Catholic Faith and promise of respectful silence, demanded an inward renunciation and an outward refutation of his honest historical conclusions—as though there were no such thing in the world as intellectual necessity or scientific conscience! This system, which cannot bend to facts, must break against them. The whole atmosphere of the age is laden with the microbes of Modernism, and all the inquisitorial ingenuity in the world cannot prevent their fructifying in living and active minds. Were every known Modernist to be silenced and excommunicated tomorrow, it certainly would not check, it might for many reasons accelerate, the spread of the epidemic. Of this the perfectly independent appearance of the phenomenon in so many different and distant centres—a fact which only the recent action of Pius X has brought fully to light—is an evident proof. Modernism is independent of propagation by contact.

It needs then no faith to foresee the incoming of the tide, or to predict the inevitable retreat of King Canute to a position of safety. But it needs some faith to believe that this forced retreat may be accomplished without dishonor and irreparable disaster to the cause of temperate and rational authority. Such, however, is the faith of all true Modernists, and the hope, more or less faint, of many who at least wish them God-speed.